USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Bird Banding Laboratory
12100 Beech Forest Road
Laurel, MD 20708-4037

MTAB 90: MEMO TO ALL BANDERS
NOVEMBER 2006

MEMORANDUM

To: **All Banders**

From: **Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL)**

In this issue:
1. *MTAB* on BBL Website
2. People in the News
3. Permit Renewal Requests
4. Band Supply
5. New Band Sizes
6. Schedule for Reporting Bandings
7. New Software for Managing and Reporting Banding Data (Bandit)
8. Band Manager, CGS, and Band-Ops
9. Changes to Responses to Neck Collar Sightings
10. Web Encounter Reporting
11. Electronic Report-to-Bander
12. New Fields in Banding and Encounter Records
13. BBL Working to Enhance Collaboration with Other Banding Programs
14. Meeting Reports
15. Pan American Shorebird Program
16. Avian Influenza

17. Hummingbird Monitoring Network

1. Please Note: *MTAB* on BBL Website

This issue of the *MTAB* has been posted to the BBL website (see
(www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/mtab/mtab.htm). To comment on the *MTAB* please contact us at
BBL@usgs.gov or call us at (301) 497-5807. Previous *MTAB*s can also be found on our website.

2. People in the News

Esther Mills retired after 36 years of Federal Service. Most of those years were spent as our
computer operator. Recently she has worked with the BBL biologists on color-marker sightings
and the BBL Outreach program. Esther will now have more time to spend with her horse and
playing with her new computer. We wish Esther well in retirement and thank her for her many
years of service to the BBL and Patuxent!

Antonio Celis-Murillo has joined the BBL and will be handling the 1-800 Mexico program and
other various BBL needs for Spanish translation and communication. He will also assist the
Biologists and the Chief. Tony has many research interests and has focused on developing new
monitoring technologies for understanding bird-habitat relationships in Mexico. His work with
the University of California – Riverside involved a range of monitoring projects including design
and evaluation of an acoustic recording system for estimating bird species abundance and
diversity.

Susi Ponce, our Bilingual Biological Technician last year, left BBL for several months to do
field work at Great Swamp NWR in New Jersey. She returned to BBL in September as a
Biological Technician, primarily assisting the Banding Biologist.

3. Permit Renewal Requests

Master banders (not subs) are now required to submit a signed application for renewal 30 days
prior to the expiration date of the permit (see
http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/resource.htm) for a downloadable version of the
permit renewal application. In the past the renewal was valid for 2 years and now it will be valid
for 3 years. Please be sure you have no outstanding delinquent data that should be submitted to
the BBL; this will delay renewal of your permit. This information was also in the MTAB 89 (see
http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/mtab/mtab89.htm).

4. Band Supply

Currently we have a full band supply in stock for 2007. We will have a two-year supply of bands
by December 31, 2006.

A change to the band inscription is planned for new band orders. The postal address will be
replaced by a web address. The toll-free telephone number will be retained. If you are planning
any "reporting rate" studies, you may want to request these new bands as this change may (or

may not) impact reporting rates. The USFWS will be investigating the possible impact on reporting rates during 2007.

5. New Band Sizes

The BBL is establishing contracts with 2 suppliers for both aluminum and hard metal bands. We also have several new band sizes. Size 5A aluminum is primarily to be used on Wood Ducks and have been available in limited quantities since August 2006. We are presently waiting for feedback from banders to determine if there is indeed a need to add this size to our band supply. In April 2007 we will have the following bands available – size 1D aluminum and hard metal for passerines and shrikes, size 8A rivet for small Bald Eagles, and 9R Rivet for large Golden Eagles.

6. Schedule for Reporting Bandings

Please review the reporting schedule for both game and nongame birds (see www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/manual/due.htm). If you have any questions about the schedule please contact Karen_Jones@usgs.gov or Kathy_Klimkiewicz@usgs.gov . Prompt submission of data is even more important now that the web reporting of encounters provides instant feedback to the finder.

If your banding data have not been submitted then band finders may be discouraged and may not report other bands that they find. It is never too early to submit your banding data! This is especially important for game bird data which should be submitted to BBL prior to the beginning of the hunting season. If banding is done during the hunting season, the data is due immediately so that we can respond to encounter reports promptly. Failure to submit banding data in a timely manner will increase our correspondence to you and foster discontent among the public.

If you get a "Request for Banding Data" letter (formerly "Up-for-Banding") because we have an encounter on one of your bands, **PLEASE** submit the banding data for that number and any other unreported data on that string immediately via either Bandit or Band Manager. If you have not used the band in question, please notify us as soon as possible (Karen_Jones@usgs.gov). Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

7. New Software for Managing and Reporting Banding Data ("Bandit")

The Bird Banding Laboratory in coordination with the Bird Banding Office (CWS) is pleased to announce the release of the newest program for data entry and submission to the BBL and the BBO (see the October 27, 2006 e-mail from the BBL). We thank all of the banders who suggested names for our new software (formerly known as TIMBO). Bandit was suggested by several banders and was endorsed by the BBL and BBO employees. We hope you find the program user friendly as well as efficient and versatile. Like any new software, it will look different and may take a little time to learn, but we think you will ultimately find it more intuitive and flexible than Band Manager. Bandit is available for download on our web site (http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/resources/bandit/software/index.html).

Some of the key points we'd like to mention about the new software are:

- Bandit is compatible with Windows versions 2000 and later as well as with Macintosh operating systems.
- It is highly compatible with Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.
- It will accept Band Manager files.
- Data submission is electronic and paper copies are no longer required.

A few things we'd like you to know about the development of Bandit are:

- We worked diligently to develop the program over the past year and tried to consider all circumstances and needs.
- To attempt to cover the majority of scenarios, a diverse group of 50 banders volunteered to routinely use and test the program during development. Thank you testers!
- The program was rigorously tested by BBL staff during development and was successfully used during the 2006 preseason waterfowl banding program in Canada.
- Several states and National Wildlife Refuges tested Bandit and successfully submitted data from the 2006 summer banding season.
- As with the release of any software, we are sure that some of you will find things that may need some improvements or functions to be added. Let us know and we will take care of these immediately or incrementally, depending on how critical the problem is.

Bandit will be supported directly by the BBL. As we could not test every possible scenario, with increasing use, we do anticipate hearing from you about aspects we may not have considered or capabilities that, until your use, were untested. While we may not be able to incorporate every individual's desires, we are confident that the vast majority of the necessary functions have been incorporated or can be added or improved upon in future versions. The following is important to know if you have questions or problems:

- If you have questions about using the program there are two methods for help in the help menu; an online video tutorial and a printable Reference Guide.
- If your questions can't be resolved by using either of the help files, there is a link on the start page of Bandit where you can send an email directly to the Banding Lab and your question will be answered within 48 hours to two business days.
- The Bandit help desk telephone line will be activated shortly and you will be notified via e-mail at that time. The telephone number may also be obtained at that point from the BBL web site (www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/resources/bandit).
- Bugs will be fixed and released in update files as they occur.
- Enhancements will be incorporated and released in subsequent versions.
- If serious problems are encountered, contact us at bandithelp@usgs.gov and the problem will receive immediate attention and resolution.

It is important that you follow the set-up procedures in the manual step by step. Banding data cannot be entered until you load your inventory and location data. Data cannot be submitted until the records are mostly error free. Some errors may be bypassed and some cannot. The program

will tell you which errors may be bypassed when you use the bypass function. If the error(s) cannot be bypassed, you will need to correct the record(s) prior to data submission.

Bandit data files are submitted electronically via e-mail and no paper schedules are required. If you replace a band that is not legible, please submit the band via regular mail with the new band number and all of the banding data for that replacement. We will chemically etch the illegible band and notify you of the complete band number so that you will have it for your records.

Please use the "Remarks" field to explain status codes and anything else that is pertinent to that record. Remarks will be part of the data file when it is submitted and are needed in order for the BBL and the BBO to do their editing functions.

Following are some easy instructions for exporting data from Band Manager and importing the data into Bandit. All files are saved in the Export directory of Band Manager and can then be imported into Bandit.

Band Inventory

1. Open Band Manager
2. Click Inventory
3. Click Export
4. Select Export to .xls format
5. Click Export
6. Name the file and click Save

Subs
1. Open Band Manager
2. Click Utilities
3. Click Program Lookups
4. Click Banders
5. Click Export
6. Select Export to xls. Format
7. Click Export
8. Name the file and click Save

Locations
1. Open Band Manager
2. Click Utilities
3. Click Program Lookups
4. Click Locations
5. Click Export
6. Select Export to xls. Format
7. Click Export
8. Name the file and click Save

Bands (banding data file)
1. Open Band Manager

2. Click Data
3. Select and open appropriate .dbf file
4. Click Export
5. Follow instructions regarding "Export Setup"
6. Click Export
7. Select Export to xls. Format
8. Click Export
9. Name the file and click Save

NOTE: Band Manager files are saved in an older version of Excel. After saving the files you must reopen and close them. As you are closing them, you will be asked if you want to save them in a newer version of Excel. Choose the appropriate version and do a save; then the files can be successfully imported into Bandit.

We encourage all banders to download and begin using Bandit as soon as possible.

8. Band Manager, CGS and Band-Ops

We thank all banders who are using Band Manager to submit banding data. At this time the BBL still requires printed banding schedules and a disc with the .txt file for a successful electronic data submission from Band Manager. In the near future we plan to eliminate the requirement to submit paper schedules. Notice of the change will be posted to our web site and will be sent via e-mail to all banders that have a valid e-mail address on file with the BBL. For assistance contact the Help Desk at bandmgr@usgs.gov or call 301-497-5845. Please see http://www.bsc-eoc.org/download/bandmgr/bmdownload.html to download updates to Band Manager.

Bird Studies Canada will provide technical and user support through December 31, 2006, after which time Band Manager will be supported only by the BBL staff. Please note that after May 31, 2007 the telephone line for the Band Manager Help Desk will be eliminated and all questions about Band Manager will need to be sent via e-mail (bandmgr@usgs.gov) after that.

Two of the original BBL programs for submitting banding data (CGS and Band-Ops) are still in use. Please remember that files from these programs will no longer be accepted after December 31, 2006. We encourage banders using these programs to switch to Bandit as soon as possible.

9. Changes to Responses to Neck Collar Sightings

Many neck collar reports are incomplete and in many cases, we are unable to match a neck collar to a band number and provide information to the reporter. Please see the April 2006 MTAB for more information on this subject.

We are currently compiling a list of permittees with contact information and collar authorizations for use in handling collar reports. Due to the overwhelming number of collar sightings reported to the BBL, starting this fall, when reports are received, we will forward them to the permittees who are authorized to use that color and code combination. It will then be the responsibility of

the permittee to keep accurate records and forward information to the BBL or the BBO if the data need to be entered into our database.

10. Web Encounter Reporting

Please be sure to report foreign encounters to the Bird Banding Laboratory (http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/bblretrv/webrec.cfm) even though you may be requesting information from e-mail listservers such as BirdBand or Sawwhetnet.

If you report recoveries (dead birds or bands removed) that are your own bands or on behalf of someone else, please keep the band(s) and encourage anyone who contacts you about reporting a band to keep the band. Also, please keep a record of the report until the Certificate of Appreciation is received. This will make it easier for you or the person reporting the band to respond to correspondence from the BBL when there is a possible problem with the band number or encounter data.

11. Electronic Report-to-Bander

We plan to begin sending the Reports-to-Bander electronically in early 2007. Please be sure your e-mail addresses are correct in our system. Any corrections and/or additions should be submitted using our web site http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/resources/modpinfo.htm. Reports will be sent electronically if we have a valid e-mail address otherwise they will be sent via regular mail. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter as we streamline our procedures and communications.

12. New Data Fields in Banding and Encounter Data Request Files

If you or anyone else requests a dataset from the BBL there are some new fields – band status (S), location code (AC), and two sets of coordinates. The familiar 10-minute block designation will be under lat-long and there are decimal degrees below that are for use with GIS programs. Translations for the band status and location precision codes follow:

Band Status:

CODE	DESCRIPTION
0	Original band
1	Replacement Band
2	Additional Band
3	Inactive master file(with enc in db)
4	Bands identified as multiple when encounter was loaded (but multi chain was not built)
5	Band lost
6	Record lost
7	Double banded 2nd

8	Band destroyed
9	Temporary record for recovery module only
F	Schedule In File

Location Precision:

CODE	DESC
0	exact
1	1 minute block
7	County
10	10 minute block
12	State
60	1 degree block
72	Country

13. BBL Working to Enhance Collaboration with Other Banding Programs

This year has been marked with several milestones towards cooperative efforts with banding programs around the globe:

As you know, the BBL and BBO have had a long-standing partnership in the North American Bird Banding Program. This year, stimulated by many changes, the BBL and the BBO have been in frequent communications. In August, the BBL Banding Biologist and BBL Encounter Data Manager visited the BBO. The BBO representatives will be visiting the BBL in January, and soon after, two other BBL employees will visit the BBO. These on-site, in-person meetings help us smoothly coordinate changes in all aspects of our dependent and complimentary operations.

In May, the BBL and the BBO received support from the Trilateral Committee on Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation to expand the North American Bird Banding Program to include Mexico. So far, we have added a toll-free telephone number for reporting bands encountered in Mexico and have provided Mexico's CONABIO (Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad) access to view the BBL database, as we have with the Canadian Wildlife Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This tool will provide government wildlife managers with tremendous capabilities to learn more about birds encountered in Mexico.

The Trilateral Committee also supported our efforts to work closely with SEMARNAT (Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) and CONABIO in order to conduct a symposium and workshop at the North American Ornithological Conference in October 2006 in Veracruz, Mexico.

 In August 2006, at the International Ornithological Congress, held in Hamburg, Germany, the first "Bird Ringing Scheme Standing Committee" meeting was held. The BBL participated along with the Canadian Wildlife Service, as well as schemes from Europe, Africa, and Asia. The BBL and the BBO joined the commitment to collaborate on sharing program management experiences and to develop ways to effectively share information.

The BBL and the BBO also worked closely with CONABIO, together with Cornell University and the Landbird Monitoring Migration Network of the Americas (LaMMNA), in organizing a symposium at the North American Ornithological Conference, on bird banding and monitoring networks across national borders. The talk presented by the Chief of the BBL, on behalf of the BBO and SEMARNAT addressed the need to develop a structure for the sharing bird banding information across the banding programs of the western hemisphere.

Immediately following the Conference, a workshop for banding program managers was conducted by the BBL, the BBO, SEMARNAT, CONABIO to initiate discussions on how to develop a flexible, voluntary framework for communication, coordination and collaboration among banding programs across the western hemisphere. Also participating were leaders of programs from Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Jamaica, as well as the head of the Italian banding scheme, who provided insights into cross-border banding program collaboration in Europe. Two outcomes included a commitment to the establishment of a web site and a shared interest in a second meeting in 2007 at a location that will allow additional banding program managers from other countries to participate. Concurrent with this meeting was a field banding training session led by the Institute for Bird Populations with assistance from the Klamath Bird Observatory and the U.S. Forest Service. This concurrent design allowed for inclusion of participants in both events.

The BBL and the BBO also served on the International Committee of the North American Banding Council (NABC) which is increasing efforts to facilitate banding education and training throughout the western hemisphere

14. Meeting Reports

Danny Bystrak and Wendy Manear visited the Canadian Bird Banding Office for an overview of their operation. Action items from this meeting should increase efficiencies in operations between the BBL and the BBO. Increased communication between the offices will facilitate improvements to our Oracle system, web reporting, banding operations, and general protocols.

Kathy Klimkiewicz attended the Inland Bird Banding (IBBA) meeting in Tellico Plains, TN. It was a profitable meeting and was attended by approximately 45 persons. The paper session was very informative and the new BBL program, Bandit, was well received by those present. An update on the BBL was also presented.

Danny Bystrak represented the BBL at the annual Western Bird Banding (WBBA) meeting in Albuquerque, NM. He participating in a molt workshop, a LaMMNA workshop, presented an update on the BBL, and gave a workshop on the new Bandit program.

Monica Tomosy presented a status update of the BBL to the "Bird Conservation Committee" meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) in Colorado.

Terry Liddick attended the Atlantic Flyway Council meeting in Charleston, SC and provided a current overview of the BBL. He also spent a month participating in the preseason waterfowl banding program in Canada. During that trip all of the banding crews used the new Bandit program as a field test and found it an improvement over previous programs.

15. Pan American Shorebird Program

The coordination of Pan American Shorebird Program (PASP) has recently been transferred from Cheri Gratto-Trevor and Gholam Alaie of the Canadian Wildlife Service to the Canadian Bird Banding Office (BBO). We would like to thank Cheri and Gholam for their many years of hard work managing this program. The PASP website can now be found on the Bird Banding Office website http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/nwrc-cnrf/default.asp?lang=en&n=CA9EA2C5-1.

A PASP listserv has been established to assist coordinators link encounters with banders. Shorebird banders who use auxiliary markers have been added to the listserv automatically. You can send marked shorebird sightings to: BBO_CWS@ec.gc.ca. When posting encounter information please include the species in the subject line.

It is the banders' responsibility to review messages on the list serve. If an encountered bird is part of your study and can be individually identified and linked to a federal band number, please contact Louise.Lauren@ec.gc.ca with the banding information so that we may keep the banding database current and ensure that the observer receives a certificate of appreciation.

If you are marking shorebirds and did not receive an email from the banding office regarding the transition of PASP, if you would like to join the PASP listserv or would like additional information on this program, please contact Lesley-Anne.Howes@ec.gc.ca or Louise.Lauren@ec.gc.ca. To assist PASP coordinators in managing PASP, please include "PASP" and your permit number in the subject line for all correspondence related to PASP.

Shorebird Bands: For a few species of shorebirds, the NABC Shorebird Banding Manual recommends different band sizes than does the North American Banding Manual and the banding program. We would like to hear from shorebird banders regarding your experience with the recommended band sizes for these and other species. Send suggestions to Kathy_Klimkiewicz@usgs.gov and include a justification for the suggested change. It is important to specify where the band should be placed: on the tarsus or above the tarsus and why. If above the tarsus placement is used it is expected that the band size used will be one size larger than that recommended in the Manual. If necessary we will incorporate changes to the recommended sizes in the Bird Banding Manual and the NABC Shorebird Banding Manual. The

table below highlights differences between what the NABC Shorebird manual recommends and what the banding program recommends:

| Species | Scientific name | Band size recommended by: | |
		Banding program	**Shorebird manual**
Black-necked Stilt	*Himantopus mexicanus*	4 -3A	4
Red Knot	*Calidris canutus*	2	2-3
White-rumped Sandpiper	*Calidris fuscicollis*	1A-1B	1A
Least Sandpiper	*Calidris minutilla*	1-1B	1B
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularia*	1B-1A	1A
Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	1A-1B	1A
Semipalmated Plover	*Charadrius semipalmatus*	1A-1B	1A
Ruddy Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres*	2-3	3
Baird's Sandpiper	*Calidris bairdii*	1B-1A	1A (recommended by PASP)

16. Avian Influenza

Please see the National Wildlife Health Laboratory web site for their October 26, 2006 update on Avian Influenza (www.nwhc.usgs.gov). The Ornithological Council has posted a revised fact sheet (September 2006) entitled: **Avian influenza: What ornithologists and banders should know** (http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/OC/avianinfluenza.html).

17. Hummingbird Monitoring Network

The Hummingbird Monitoring Network (HMN), headquartered in Patagonia, AZ has launched its web site. You can visit the site at http://hummonnet.org/index.html.